

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-50 and 55-73 are pending and at issue.

The Examiner has required restriction in this application among the claims of:

Group I: Claims 1-46 and 71-73, drawn to a method of preparing cellulose ethers;

Group II: Claims 47-50, drawn to carboxymethyl cellulose, methyl cellulose, nonionic cellulose ether, and ionic cellulose ether; and

Group III: Claims 55-70, drawn to a cellulose floc, a method of preparing cellulose floc, and a method of preparing mercerized cellulose floc.

Applicants respectfully traverse this restriction requirement.

Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of the claims of Groups I-III. A search of the prior art relevant to the claims of Group I would develop the prior art relevant to the claims of Groups II and III. The process recited in the claims of Group I produces the products recited in the claims of Group II. Furthermore, the cellulose floc recited in the claims of Group III can be prepared by the first step (step (a)) of the process recited in the claims of Group I and can be used to prepare the cellulose ethers recited in the claims of Group I. The methods of preparing a mercerized and recovered cellulose floc in the claims of Group III are encompassed by the first step (step (a)) of the process recited in the claims of Group I. Therefore, examination of all the claims together would not be a serious burden on the Examiner. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this restriction requirement.

In order to be fully responsive, applicants hereby provisionally elect the claims of Group I (claims 1-46 and 71-73).

The Examiner has also required election of a single species of cellulose pulp from those recited in claims 2-10, and a cellulose ether selected from those recited in claims 47-50.

Applicants hereby elect sulfite pulp as the cellulose pulp, and carboxymethyl cellulose as the cellulose ether.

In view of the above remarks, applicants respectfully request that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case pass to issue. If there are any other issues remaining, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: August 14, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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